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INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES:
SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION TRANSMITTED
UNDER ARTICLE 73 e OF THE CHARTER. REPORT OF
THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

West African Territories

GAMBIA 1/

1/ In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1332 (XIII) this summary is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

59-04346

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NOTE: The following symbols are used:

Three dots (...)	information not available
Dash (-)	information negligible or non-existent
Slash 1948/1949	crop or financial year
Hyphen 1948-1949	annual average

GENERAL INFORMATION

The total area of the Gambia, in West Africa, is 4,003 square miles, the Colony, with the capital Bathurst, covering twenty-nine and the Protectorate 3,978. The population was roughly 250,000 in 1947 and 266,476^{2/} in 1957. A census in 1951 gave the Colony's population as 27,297, including 544 non-Africans. Registration of births and deaths has not yet been applied throughout the Territory.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Ninety per cent of the population are peasant farmers and their families on whose main cash crop, ground-nuts, the economy of the Territory is almost entirely dependent. Oilseeds are marketed through the Gambia Oilseeds Marketing Board, on which the agricultural community is represented; fluctuations in the world market are cushioned by the Stabilization Fund. Profits made by the Oilseeds Marketing Board are placed in the Farmers' Fund, which finances development schemes, mostly economic, for the benefit of the farmers. In recent years, a great expansion of rice cultivation has caused rice to become an important cash crop in certain swamp areas. Efforts are being made to find alternative crops and to improve the soil and the farming system. Work has started on ilmenite mining.

Just before the rains break each year, from 10,000 to 15,000 migrants known as "strange farmers" enter the Gambia from Senegal and Portuguese Guinea to cultivate ground-nuts on land lent by Gambian farmers. They come for the better prices obtained for ground-nuts in the Gambia, where the cost of transport from the farms to the port of shipment is low.

From 1946 to 1951 there was an adverse visible balance of trade. The balance was favourable from 1952 to 1953, but again adverse from 1955 to 1957.

A total of £WAL.3 million^{3/} was originally made available for development under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1945. Of this sum,

^{2/} Excluding seasonal immigrants.

^{3/} The local currency is the West African pound (£WA) which is equal to the pound sterling or US\$2.80.

£21800,000 was for medical, agricultural, veterinary and educational services, including capital expenditure on buildings and plant, and £21500,000 was for the development of Bathurst and the Kombo.

Gambia's initial territorial allocation under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1955 was £200,000. With any unspent balance from the previous development funds of about £600,000, there was a total territorial allocation for 1955 to 1960 of about £800,000, to which was added in 1957 a supplementary allocation of £50,000. A programme for the Gambia on the basis of the funds available has been approved and provides for the continuation of schemes now under way and for new schemes.

LAND, AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK

Individual ownership of land is recognized in the Colony and there is no restriction on the acquisition of land by non-Africans. In the Protectorate, land is held on indigenous customary tenure from the Native Authority for the district in which it is vested. In general, land may not be alienated or leased to non-Africans without the consent of the Governor. Except in a few cases non-African occupation of land is confined to leases for not more than twenty-one years. Protectorate land held by non-indigenous inhabitants consists only of sites occupied by government stations and missions and of plots leased to traders. The total acreage held by missions and traders is small.

The soil is mostly poor and sandy except in the riverine swamps. On upland soils, the main food crops are sorghum, millet, cassava, maize and beans, with the first two forming a crop rotation with the main cash crop, ground-nuts. The occurrence of a "hungry season" before the harvest, when food stocks from the previous harvest ran out, in conjunction with the poorer quality of the cash crop in the more densely populated areas, provided evidence that the land had been cropped more intensively than it ought to be under the shifting system of management. By 1953 it was clear that the existing agricultural system could neither continue to support the increasing population nor meet the demands for better standards of living. The problem was to find a system of land management which would make possible a general change from a primitive to a developed system. A further result of intensive cropping, with its shortening of fallow periods,

was a decrease of cover for predators which controlled animal pests that destroyed crops; the disappearance of leopards led to a great increase in dog-faced baboons, which became a serious economic problem.

Government action to solve agricultural problems includes: opening of new land in riverine swamps for rice production, establishment of an experimental rice farm (1947), taking over (1955) of a 4,700-acre empoldered rice farm set up by the Colonial Development Corporation, and continuation of experiments in the techniques and economics of mechanized rice growing; distribution of improved seed rice; experiments in crop rotation, balanced systems of farming, and dry-season crops, such as sugar cane; irrigation; soil research; fertilizer and compost trials, including use of an annual 15,000 tons of ground-nut shells; building of access causeways into the more fertile swamplands, and bridging of creeks, contract mechanized ploughing of rice lands; a campaign by word of mouth and films to persuade the men to share the work of rice growing, traditionally the exclusive work of women; the engagement of a rice specialist from India, persuasion of the Gambia farmer to be self-sufficient in food and not to concentrate on the cash crop; enactment of rules requiring "strange farmers" to work partly on food crops. and a continuing campaign against animal pests that in five years rid the land of over 140,000 baboons, 50,000 destructive monkeys and 35,000 wild pigs. By the end of 1957, increased production of food, particularly of rice, combined with reduction of pests, had in most parts of the Gambia freed the people from the "hungry season".

In 1946, a cattle census gave a total of 86,000 head. In the same year, veterinary measures in the Gambia and in adjacent French areas were co-ordinated. A census in 1951 listed 122,477 cattle, 50,527 sheep, 75,468 goats and 2,614 pigs. The cattle had increased so much owing to immunization against diseases that there was danger of overstocking. Purchase of cattle by the Veterinary Department was begun, together with a campaign to persuade owners to sell their animals, and an export trade to neighbouring countries was started.

In 1948, the Colonial Development Corporation began to develop at Yundum a poultry farm intended to produce yearly 20 million eggs and one million pounds of dressed poultry. The Gambia was selected because of its need for agricultural

development to reduce its dependence on ground-nuts. By the end of 1949, over 10,000 acres of bush had been cleared and were being ploughed, and construction of industrial buildings and residential quarters was almost completed. But the project was unsuccessful; disease killed more than a third of the laying flock and destroyed the whole poultry flock. In 1951 the project was abandoned. Some of the buildings were then used for an experimental farm run jointly by the Gambia Government and the Corporation, the rest being taken over by the Government for other purposes.

FORESTRY

A small Forestry Department was set up in 1950, and work began on demarcation of forests. At the end of 1957, forest parks covered 101,358 acres, consisting of 37,551 acres of protection forests, 46,804 acres of production forests, and 17,225 acres of forests demarcated by district authorities. The timber potential is poor, and exploitation is on a small scale.

FISHERIES

The marine fishing grounds are worked by Gambians and also by men from neighbouring territories. Senegalese almost monopolize the Gambia River fishing in the trade season, and sell their catches largely outside the Gambia; skilled Senegalese competition has restricted local interest in fishing. The Government has taken measures to induce Gambians to catch the fish in their waters and to aid those already engaged in fishing. Classes for fishermen were started in 1947, and in 1952 a fishing school was established to train men from all divisions of the Protectorate; after completing the course they return home with capital and equipment earned during training. Other government action includes experiments in salting and drying, trapping and netting and in mechanization; abolition of import duties on nets and outboard motors; provision of canoes on credit; and surveys of fishing grounds. By 1955, fresh fish was being distributed up to seventy miles inland, and a fish smoking and drying industry was supplying cured fish to Bathurst and the Protectorate.

In 1949 the Colonial Development Corporation established Atlantic Fisheries to catch and process shark, tuna and crayfish off West Africa. Catches of sharks

were above estimates, but as the price of shark oil fell the values of catches were below estimates. Tuna and crayfish resources were below estimates and operating costs were higher than expected. Consequently, the project was abandoned in 1951. The Government of the Gambia took over some fishing launches, gear and shore equipment.

MINING, POWER AND INDUSTRY

Large deposits of ilmenite on the coast were discovered in 1953; by the end of 1957, 21,350 tons had been mined.

Production of power was 1 million kwh in 1948, 1.7 million in 1953, and 5 million in 1956.

The private extraction of ground-nut oil began in 1950. The Gambia Oilseeds Marketing Board started to shell ground-nuts before shipment in 1953, using private plant, and began shelling with its own plant in 1955; annual production is about 90,000 tons. The Government aids home industries, such as weaving and the making of pottery and baskets, by loans for the purchase of materials and rebates of customs duties. Gambian shipwrights build cutters and canoes for carrying produce and for fishing.

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 1947, there were thirty miles of bituminous roads in the vicinity of Bathurst and about 600 miles of sandy and laterite tracks in the Protectorate. In 1957, the bituminous roads totalled forty-two miles, and there were in the Protectorate 185 miles of laterite roads and 534 miles of earth tracks. Most of the tracks are open in the dry season only. An important development in road transport has been the building of causeways into fertile swamplands and the bridging of creeks. Aircraft movements in 1947, when departments and organizations of the United Kingdom Government were still in Bathurst, numbered 1,146; in 1953, 264; and in 1957, 1,139. The Gambia River, one of the best waterways in West Africa, is a natural outlet for Senegal, but its value has been restricted by artificial boundaries, customs barriers and the Dakar-Niger railway, which runs parallel to the river and in places only about

thirty miles from it. The river is the Territory's main means of transport; it is navigable for ships of fifteen feet draught to 150 miles up river, and for vessels drawing six and a half feet to 288 miles from the mouth. The river's tributaries form an important part of the transport system. Ferries carry passengers and vehicles across the river at eight points, and also across two major creeks. A new wharf at Bathurst, with a berthing face of 290 feet, was completed in 1952. Tonnage entered in 1947 totalled 416,639; in 1953, 908,323; and in 1957, 403,976; since 1955 less tonnage has been needed owing to shelling of ground-nuts before shipment.

Letters and papers carried by the postal administration in 1947 numbered 579,540; in 1953, 1,622,702; and in 1957, 1,508,460. Automatic telephone service was installed in the Bathurst area in 1952; in the same year a new trunk telephone network was opened linking Bathurst with two centres in French West Africa. There were four radio telegraph stations in 1947 and five in 1955.

PUBLIC FINANCE

Revenue and expenditure
 (thousand West African pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
Revenue	694	1,201	2,075
Expenditure	634	1,086	1,857
Main heads of revenue			
Customs	339	518	1,118
Direct taxation	149	229	220
Colonial Development and Welfare and other grants	76	215	278
Main heads of expenditure			
Public works	255	312	521
Agriculture	26	126 ^{a/}	106
Medical and health services		103	153
Education	28	60	107

a/ Including development and rice farm.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Imports and exports
 (thousand West African pounds)

	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
General imports c.i.f.	1,898	2,219	4,762
General exports f.o.b.	1,170	2,860	3,981
Principal imports			
Cotton piece goods	651	365	712
Rice	12	192	480
Road motor vehicles and parts	56	62	196
Sugar	34	74	184
Principal exports			
Ground-nuts	1,066	2,478	3,722
Ilmenite	-	-	117
Palm kernels	24	86	70
Foodstuffs for animals	1	21	51

In 1947, 35.9 per cent of imports came from the United Kingdom, in 1953, 54.5 per cent, and in 1957, 47.1 per cent. In 1947, 95.9 per cent of exports went to the United Kingdom, in 1953, 92.9 per cent, and in 1956, 13.4 per cent with 63.1 per cent going to Italy. In 1957, 41.6 per cent went to the United Kingdom.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Social problems are mainly those attendant on the gradual spread of education, the adoption of new ways of thought and life, and the resulting stresses on traditional customs. Socio-economic surveys in the Colony and the Protectorate were made in 1954 and 1955 under the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme. Further research was made by a sociologist whose work was financed from Colonial Development and Welfare funds and local revenues.

The economic position of women as cultivators of rice in the Protectorate and as traders in the Colony greatly enhances their status. Monogamy seems to be spreading in communities which accept polygamy. Training for improvement of living standards is carried out in villages by Gambian women employed by the Department of Education. There is no discrimination against women in employment.

The numbers of persons employed in 1957 in occupations other than agriculture were: government service, 2,287; distributive trades, 1,449; shipping, 361; building, 157; others, 989. In addition to the migrations of the "strange farmers", there is some seasonal movement within the Gambia for ground-nut farming. Labour policy is to raise standards of skill and reliability so that increasing responsibility can be given to Gambian workers, to foster a trade union movement; and to deal with seasonal unemployment. There is a government technical school. In 1957 there were three registered workers' organizations, with a total membership of 1,047.

A Registrar of Co-operative Societies was appointed in 1955. In 1957 there were five registered and thirteen unregistered societies.

The cost of living index, based on the estimated needs of a worker earning £6 a month and having one wife and one child, was 100 on 31 March 1950, 122 at the end of 1953, and 104 at the end of 1957.

In recent years, an extensive programme of road-building and drainage has been carried out in Bathurst; in 1950, one and a half square miles of swamp land were bunded, one square mile being available for residential purposes; by the end of 1957, about 400 acres had been reclaimed. In the Protectorate, housing is improved by the application of specially designed building regulations. Bamboo and a termite-resistant palm provide plentiful and cheap material for laths and framework.

In Bathurst, where tribal organization is weak or absent, the need for organized social welfare work is greatest. In the Protectorate, the village communities provide security for the old, the disabled and the destitute, and also a social environment in which juvenile delinquency does not thrive. Even in Bathurst, the only major urban area, destitution is not a serious problem owing to the operation of an "extended family" system, which involves adults in wide obligations. A home for the infirm and destitute is run by the Government, which also distributes relief funds through voluntary and religious bodies. A social welfare officer in Bathurst is mainly concerned with juvenile delinquency, probation work and the encouragement of youth clubs. A Juvenile Court, established in 1949, dealt with fifty-eight delinquents in 1950 and 1951, and with twenty-three in 1956.

Those convicted of offences against the person numbered seventy-eight in 1947, seventy-three in 1953 and ninety-two in 1957; for offences against property the figures were 203, 381 and 226. The daily average prison population was 120 in 1947, 136 in 1953 and 103 in 1957.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Medical services are based on two general hospitals, one at Bathurst and one at Banskang in the Protectorate. The new Bathurst hospital (141 general beds), which was opened in 1953 and serves the town and surrounding area, is equipped to deal with general medical and surgical cases, and has an obstetrical unit (14 beds) and an out-patients' department. Banskang hospital (61 general beds) takes general medical and surgical cases, and has four maternity beds and an out-patients' department. The little-used infectious diseases hospital, after renovation, was opened in 1953 as a tuberculosis sanatorium with twenty-four beds. There are six health centres and thirty-eight government and three mission dispensaries and sub-dispensaries. Maternity and child welfare work, with twenty-one centres, is mainly carried out in Bathurst; three of the clinics are in the Island of St. Mary and nine in the Protectorate. Dresser-dispensers and nurse-midwives are trained at the Bathurst Hospital, and health inspectors at departmental headquarters.

The lowest degree of malaria endemicity is probably in Bathurst, where extensive land-reclamation and drainage have largely controlled mosquito-breeding in the dry season. In the Protectorate, where endemicity is higher, malaria is probably not a major factor in morbidity or mortality among adults. There are between 6,000 and 7,000 cases of leprosy in the Territory; with help from the World Health Organization and, the United Nations Children's Fund clinics to combat this disease have been established. Tuberculosis is a serious problem in Bathurst; in 1956, a tuberculosis out-patient clinic was opened at the general hospital.

Drainage and reclamation schemes were begun in 1948 and 1949 with the aims of providing improved and new land for housing and of controlling malaria. Further preventive measures are carried out by sanitary inspectors in the Protectorate through health propaganda, vaccination, inspection of compounds and food, and the building and maintenance of sanitary structures.

The Medical Research Council maintains laboratories at Fajara, near Bathurst, with a twenty-bed ward and a field station in the Protectorate. The main emphasis of research is on malaria.

In conjunction with the Food and Agriculture Organization WEO and UNICEF, a long-range nutrition project was started in 1956 for pregnant women, nursing mothers and children, including a school feeding scheme; nearly two million daily rations were provided in 1957.

Co-operation with health authorities in adjacent parts of French West Africa was arranged at the Anglo-French and International Medical Conferences held in Accra in 1946 and in Dakar in 1951.

Recurrent and capital expenditure in 1947 to 1952 totalled £WA569,816, and in 1953-1957 £WA716,846.

	<u>Medical and health staff</u> (Government)		
	<u>1947</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1957</u>
Registered physicians	7	9	12
Nurses (of senior training and certificated)	53	8 ^{a/}	97
Partially trained nurses	...	...	67
Midwives (of senior training and certificated)	30	...	34
Partially trained midwives	...	...^{b/}	36
Sanitary inspectors	30	4 ^{b/}	36

a/ Nursing sisters only.

b/ Sanitary superintendents only.

EDUCATIONAL CONDITIONS

In 1945, the Government took over primary education in Bathurst from the missions, though the schools retained their religious affiliation. They are administered through management committees on which the religious authorities are represented. In 1947, the Board of Education was reconstituted so as to allow for adequate representation of the Protectorate; the Board, composed mostly of

Gambians, advises the Government on educational policy throughout the Territory. There is no differentiation between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in schools or educational expenditure.

In the urban area of Bathurst, about 70 per cent of the children reaching the age of five years obtain places in school; a further 10 per cent of those who seek admittance cannot be placed. Pupils follow a seven-year primary course; about 25 per cent of primary pupils enter secondary schools, the rest spending a further three years in primary school or in a secondary modern school. Fees are ten shillings a year. About 50 per cent of the children of school age in the rural area of the Colony go to school. In the Protectorate, where the basic course is of four years, less than 5 per cent of the children attend school. Secondary education is concentrated in Bathurst; there is one secondary modern school in the Protectorate.

All Gabian teachers were trained in Sierra Leone or the Gold Coast (now the independent State of Ghana) until 1949, when a Protectorate training centre for thirty men was opened at Georgetown. When in 1951 the Colonial Development Corporation poultry project at Yundum was closed, the buildings not used for the experimental farm were acquired by the Government for conversion to a teacher-training college similar to the Jeanes School in Kenya. In 1953 the course was opened to women. The conversion of poultry farm buildings to residential quarters was completed in 1955 at a cost of £WA40,000 provided by the Farmers' Fund. In 1954 the course was extended, and a scheme began by which experienced teachers go to the United Kingdom for further training. At the end of 1955, it was decided to separate Yundum from the Education Department and to establish it as an independent entity administered by the Principal under a Board of Governors.

Recurrent expenditure by the Education Department was £WA263,450 in 1947 to 1952 and £WA548,550 in 1953 to 1957.

Schools

	<u>1947</u>		<u>1953</u>		<u>1957</u>	
	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Independent</u> (aided and non-aided)	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Independent</u> (aided and non-aided)	<u>Govt.</u>	<u>Independent</u> (aided and non-aided)
Primary	13	5	35	7	37	11
Secondary	-	4	1	4	1	5
Vocational	1	-	4	1	2	-
Teacher-training	-	-	1	-	1	-

Pupils

<u>Schools</u>	<u>1947</u>		<u>1953</u>		<u>1957</u>	
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Primary	2,882		3,382	870	4,238	1,654
Secondary	187	151	395	173	442	206
Vocational						
in the Territory	...	...	35	12	40	3
in the United Kingdom	...	...	14	10	36	14
Teacher-training	...	...	14	12	29	21
Higher education						
in the United Kingdom	...	...	20	9	35	10
elsewhere	...	...	14	8	1	-

Teachers

<u>Schools</u>	<u>1947</u>		<u>1953</u>		<u>1957</u>	
	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
Primary	(		84	72	100	112
Secondary	(	148	27	14	23	15
Vocational	(		5	6	3	2
Teacher-training	(		2	-	5	2

There is a library at Bathurst which includes a book-box system for country readers. The secondary schools and teacher-training college, and some primary schools, have their own libraries, which are aided by Government grants. There are two weekly English-language newspapers, and the Government publishes a daily news bulletin. Two mobile film units travel in the Protectorate in the dry season and there are static projectors at each of the four divisional headquarters.